



**BERTHA W. HENRY**, County Administrator  
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December 15, 2008

Mr. Eric Buermann, Chair  
South Florida Water Management District  
P.O. Box 24860  
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

Dear Chair Buermann,

I am writing regarding Item 44 on the South Florida Water Management District's December 15 -16, 2008 meeting agenda relating to the 'River of Grass' Sale Agreement and Lease. As you know, Broward County has a long history of support for Everglades restoration and has been a consistent partner and advocate in these efforts. However, I am writing to express my concerns relating to the Governing Board's consideration of the purchase of 187,000 acres of Everglades Agricultural Area at a total cost of \$1.34 Billion. With this correspondence, I am requesting that this item be deferred for further economic analysis.

The County acknowledges that there may be significant environmental benefits to be achieved with the restoration of the "River of Grass." Our concerns relate to the financial aspects of the decision given the current economic climate, particularly if there is the potential for diversion of resources from other critical projects and needs. With a cost to Broward County taxpayers estimated at \$625 million over 30 years, such investments require consideration alongside other existing priorities and obligations, such as the pressing need to develop alternative water supplies. In the current economic environment, an investment of this proportion deserves additional consideration and vetting with affected counties prior to moving forward with binding, legal commitments with implications for local governments.

Despite these reservations, please be assured that Broward County remains a partner in Everglades restoration.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Bertha Henry, Administrator  
Broward County

Cc: Carol Wehle, Executive Director, SFWMD  
Broward County Board of County Commissioners